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Redevelopment Board Minutes 01/28/2008

Arlington Redevelopment Board Minutes of January 28, 2008

Members Present: Christopher Loret

Andrew West
Edward Tsoi
Roland Chaput
Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present : Kevin J. O'Brien
Joey Glushko
David Berry

Andrew West called the meeting to order at 7:05 and asked the members of the Chamber of Commerce in attendance to introduce themselves. They were Michelle Meagher, Director and board members Bob Bowes, Jan Whited, and Rob Mirak. Andrew West introduced the discussion topic by explaining what the ARB has been considering to revitalizing Arlington's commercial areas. The two boards agreed that it was a good idea to have this dialogue before acting on proposals. The concept of shared parking was discussed with the Michelle Meagher pointing out several existing examples. The lack of loading spaces was discussed and Bob Bowes pointed out that the average age of home buyers in Arlington seemed to be decreasing. It was mentioned that there were empty office and retail spaces and some attention should be paid to that situation. The boards discussed having the right mix of businesses.

The boards discussed the storefront improvement program the ARB is proposing. Ed Tsoi suggested priority should be given to blocks that want to participate, then to single stores that would be good examples, then to empty storefronts. Michelle Meagher mentioned that many small business owners feel that Town doesn't want businesses because of many regulations. Rob Mirak pointed out that Arlington could benefit if it could give its businesses a competitive advantage. Bob Bowes observed that in recent past many commercial properties have been converted to residential use. He also thought that there were too many different zoning districts in town and that made it difficult to know what was and wasn't allowed at a property.

The boards then discussed the agenda for the February 28th Chamber breakfast meeting. They agreed that the ARB should emphasize the storefront improvement program, but touch on the Mass Ave reconstruction and the other commercial revitalization proposals. Bruce Fitzsimmons offered to write a letter to invite all banks to participate in revitalization efforts.

Chamber members left the meeting and Andrew West then suggested a rewrite of the brochure on the Board's Commercial Revitalization Program based on a reorganization of the current version.

The Board then reviewed meeting minutes. Roland Chaput moved that the minutes of the December 3, 2007 meeting be approved. Ed Tsoi seconded the motion and the board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Roland Chaput moved that the minutes of the December 10, 2007 meeting with a small amendment be approved. Chris Loret seconded the motion and the board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Chris Loret moved that the minutes of the December 17, 2007 meeting with a small amendment be approved. Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Bruce Fitzsimmons moved that the minutes of the January 14, 2008 meeting with a small amendment be approved. Ed Tsoi seconded the motion and the board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

The Board next talked about the employee parking at Sunrise Assisted Living in the Heights. Staff was instructed to study the idea of having the Town take over jurisdiction of the lot with the Selectmen issuing permits. They also discussed the idea of the Chamber of Commerce issuing permits.

The Board talked again about having the right mix of businesses and staff indicated it would follow up to see how to determine the mix and how to make it happen.

Kevin O'Brien then showed the Board two examples of signage improvements: one for 127 Mass. Ave. and one for 594 Mass. Ave.

Kevin O'Brien showed the Board the plans for the division of the property at 187 Lowell St. which has applied for Board of Survey approval for a new road, and brought the Board up to date about other happenings in town.

The Board reviewed its upcoming meeting schedule and decided to meet on February 4th to review the Commercial Revitalization Brochure and the presentation for the Chamber Breakfast.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien